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What "Kymry" means

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WHAT "KYMRY" MEANS

A brief outline of the origin, history
and significance of the ancient
Celtic word, "Kymry"

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An Address by

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What "Kymry" Means

T IS a great privilege to honor in some small degree the Kymry Society of Chicago, which has honored the name "Kymry" by lecting it as the name of its society, and also to express tribute to loyal Wales, which still cherishes the memory of the ory of the Celtic race.

During the past few years we have heard much about Ireland ıd its seven hundred years of struggle for freedom but we have ıard little about Wales, that brave little Celtic nation which for er a thousand years resisted the raids of the Norsemen, the cursions of Irish, Scotch, Danes, Angles and Saxons, the fierce tacks of Roman legions and the persistent invasions of English mies.

The unequal struggle in defense of their liberties continued om the final departure of the Romans in 446 A. D. to the union Wales with England in 1282, a period of 836 years.

In 1282, Llewellyn, the last native prince of the Cymry, died defense of his native land and the ancient kingdom of Cumbria ased to be numbered among independent nations.

The origin of the word "Kymry" is veiled in mystery, but it is ıe of the most ancient words in the world, and we shall find in ır study that it is not confined to any one race or people, but at it runs like a golden thread through the history of many ıtions, far back into the dim dawn of history.

To trace this mysterious word back through thousands of years a task that would require a thorough familiarity with many nguages and years of research among the records of the past.

It is especially difficult to trace the history of the word, since ıe ancient priests of the Kymry kept but few written records ıd transmitted the knowledge, secrets and mysteries which they ıssessed by oral instruction from generation to generation.

This outline is not in any sense a thesis on the word "Kymry," ıt it is merely a co-ordination of facts gathered from many ıurces, a confluence of notes gleaned from many books, with the ıpe that in the years to come someone who is better qualified undertake the task may continue the research.

The generally accepted meaning of the word Kymry is defined by the Century Dictionary of Names as follows:

"Cymry or Kymry (Kimri) plural of Cymro, a Welshman. *The origin of the name is unknown;* some connect it with Welsh "Cymmer," a confluence of waters. It is the name given to themselves by the Welsh. In its wide application, the term is often applied to that division of the Celtic race which is more nearly allied or akin to the Welsh, including also the Cornishmen and the Bretons or Armoricans, as distinguished from the Gadhelic division."

An old book, Parry's Cambrian Plutarch, says: "Cymry is the name by which the Welsh have distinguished themselves from time immemorial. It implies a first, or aboriginal people, and is pronounced as if written "Kumry."

In the Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 5, Page 318, we read, however, that "Should a serf or a stranger happen to become a bard, he became personally a free Cymro or Welshman, but his children were not free, though the time in which his descendants might rise to the privileges of a free Cymro was shortened!"

It is evident, therefore, that all the people of Wales were not free Cymry.

If Kymry means a Welshman, why is not the Prince of Wales called the Prince of Kymry or Cumbria?

Why is the Duke of Cumberland a prince of the blood royal?

Why was London decorated with "silver and blue" during the recent marriage of the Princess Mary?

If the Ard-Righ was the highest chief or paramount king, what was the Cum-Righ?

What was the Kingdom of Cumbria and who was the Prince of Cumbria or Kymry?

What do the Celtic words "Cum" and "Righ" mean?

In tracing the history of the word "Kymry" it is necessary that we trace the close connection which exists between such names as—

Kymry	Comares	Gomery
Cumbria	Comrea	Cambri
Cymry	Montgomery	Cimmerii
Cimbri	Cambrai	Cumbra
Commercy	Kumara	

and many other names which are closely connected, if indeed, they

did not come from the same source and have practically the same meaning.

In the study of these names we must also remember that C and K were used interchangeably; that G was frequently used instead of C; that S seems to have been used in some lands instead of C; and that sometimes C was omitted altogether, and in other instances, the letters T and H were used.

The link which connects two of these names may be a similarity of meaning, an identity of pronunciation or the use of the same coat or arms, motto, crest, etc.

In Family Names (Cumber) by N. A. Lower, Page 76, we read:

"Cumbra was the name of an Anglo-Saxon chief, A. D. 756. The name means "One having or bearing a standard."

Mr. Hew Morrison, Librarian of the Edinburgh Public Library, says:

"Regarding the origin of the word "Comrie," it is a Gaelic word which really means "Sanctuary," whether civil sanctuary or ecclesiastical sanctuary. Sanctuary does not in such a case mean a place of worship, but a place of refuge. There were several of these in Scotland."

In Landmarks of Scottish Life and Language, by William Lyttel, Page 54, the author says: "'Comerich' is 'Comaraich,' meaning protection, mercy, favor, grace, also a sanctuary or place of refuge."

Longman's Gazeteer of the World gives the derivation of Comrie, as from "Comar" or "Cumar"—a confluence.

Parry's Cambrian Plutarch says: "The district called Cumbria embraced a larger extent of territory than the modern Cumberland, which seems to be a corruption of the old name. It comprised all that part of the North anciently occupied by the Cymry and reached even to the borders of Scotland."

The Chronicle of Carlisle tells us what the extent of this Kingdom of Cumbria was and Ninian's History of the Church of Cumbria, also gives valuable information about it.

In "Councils and Ecclesiastic Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland" by Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs (Vol. 2), "The Church of Cumbria" or Strathclyde, A. D. 608-1188, we find the following:

"Cumbria is the land of the Bretti or 'Cumbraland.' In A. D. 1070-1091 Scottish Kings ruled over Cumberland and

Westmoreland, as well as Scottish Cumbria. English Cumbria was gradually severed from British dominion by Northumbrian conquest, and Scottish Cumbria for some years prior to A. D. 685 was subject altogether to Northumbria."

"Donald, the brother of Constantine, King of Scotland, was elected King of Cumbria or Strathclyde, A. D. 908. On the death of Edgar, King of Scotland, in 1106, Cumbria, north of the Solway, was bequeathed to David, his younger brother, with the title of 'Comes' or Earl of Cumbria, 1107-1124 A. D."

Historians' History of Scotland (Vol. 5, Page 334) says that:

"Ailred, who wrote in the reign of Malcolm IV, terms it 'Cumbria' and the people the 'Cumbri.' "

Hakonar Saga (III, Pages 223-227) says:

"The two Cumbraes, two small islands to the west of Scotland, the islands of the Cumbrians, originally called 'Kumr-Eyiar' or 'Kumr-ie,' being two of the islands that the King of Scots would not give up to King Haakon in suing for peace. Also called 'Kumreyjum,' which means Kumrey Isles."

Landmarks of Scottish Life and Language, by William Lyttel, Edinburgh, 1877, Page 44, says:

"A number of churches, oratories and other Christian institutions adorned the Cumbrae Islands in the age prior to the eruption of the Northmen toward the close of the eighth century. In some respects these islands may be justly compared with Iona."

In his thesis The Ethnography of the Cimbri, published in the Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Canon Rawlinson throws much light on the subject. On pages 150-158 of Vol. 6 of the Journal of the Anthropological Institute, 1877, he says:

"There are two opinions as to the origin of the word 'Cimbri'—one that it is of German origin, the other that it is Celtic. The supposed German ethnology of the name is referred by some to the root 'Kampfer'—a fighter; by others to 'Chempho,' meaning 'champions.' "

Canon Rawlinson then proceeds to present his reasons for believing that it is of Celtic origin and on page 155 says:

"The name Cimbri has been identified with the term Cymry or Cymraeg, which is still the native name of the Welsh. The name Cimbri well expresses Cymry. The consonants of the two words differ only in the additional 'b' of Cimbri, a very

slight phonetic corruption; one natural to the Romans; one which Roman writers assert was made in this very word; and one which was made again when a Latin speaking race fell in with the Cymry in Britain.

"The corruption was natural to the Romans, who made from 'cum' and 'uro' Cumburo; it was one which was repeated when Latin speaking ecclesiastics became acquainted with the Cymry of western Britain, whom they called 'Cambri' or 'Cambrici,' and their country 'Cambria.'

"The only vowel change made in expressing Cymry and Cimbri is that on the 'y' sounded like short 'u' into 'i,' which is to be accounted for by the absence of that sound from the Latin language. As the 'i' was not an exact equivalent, it was not constant, but was replaced on the second occasion by 'a,' which is perhaps a little nearer. The 'b' appears also in modern Cumberland—the land of the Cymry.

"There had once been a great people in the Caucasian region, whose name 'Cimmerii'—derived from the Greek word 'Kimmerioi'—might seem to connect them with the Cimbri, and this people might have been of the same race. This people was powerful in the time of Homer, 1000 B. C., and again in the Seventh Century B. C."

To illustrate how this ancient name is connected with many nations, let us note merely a few of the many instances in which the same name or one very similar is now used or was used in the past.

China
Kumara

Siam
Kumra

New Zealand
Kumara

Africa
Kumra

Babylonia
Sumeria

Palestine
Humri
Gomer
Omri

Mexico
Cumbre

Persia
Kum

Turkey
Komar

Indo-China
Sum

Abyssinia
Suma

Santo Domingo
Cumbre

Assyria
Kummuh

Scotland
Cumbria
Cumbrae
Comrie

England
Cumbria
North-Umbria
Cumberland

Belgium
Cambre

Wales
Kymry
Cambria

France
Combre
Cambre
Commercy

Denmark
Cimbri

India
Kumrah, Kumara (Hindoo God of War)
Kumana (Ceylon)
Tomara (Descendant of the flame)

Tahiti
Pomara (The King)

Guam
"Chomorrans"—the name of the people of Guam

Ireland
Combre
Cromie
Comeragh Mts.

Holland
Kromme

Spain
Comares
Comare (a fairy)

Portugal (Anciently —Port-Cale)
Coimbra

Italy
Umbria
Comero, Cumea (Cumaean Sibyl, 1050 B. C.)

Greece
Comrea
Cyme (1000 B. C.)
Combreia

Montenegro
Kom

Hungary
Cumania

Crete
Cameri

Russia
Gumri
Kumi

Byzantium
Cimmbrii

Japan
Komoro
Komura

Peru
Camana

Venezuela
Cumana

Porto Rico
Comerio

Argentine
Cumbre

Germany
Kummerow

Guatemala
Cumbre

Canary Islands
Gomera

"Whittaker, alluding to the name, which the Welsh still retain, calls Cymri and Gael, equally the general designations of the Celtae, being the hereditary name of the Gauls, from Gomer, the son of Japhet, an opinion that is embraced by others, and seems founded on the conjecture of Josephus (Antiq. 1.6). It is an origin of the 'grand generic term,' much easier admitted than that they 'were produced from the elements of their own proper soil and climate.'" —O'Connor.

Clelland (p. 202) says: "The appelation comes from the ancient Celtic 'Kym,' a mountain. We find the island of Cimbrei, now Cumray, the kingdom of Cumbria, etc. In the Commentaries of Caesar we also find Cimber a proper name. The Bretons are said to assume the name Cumero.

"The Cumri, whom the Welsh Triads make the first colonists, are otherwise believed to have been the second, and of a different

race. That they were not, may appear from what has already been said; and whether they proceeded from Aquitain, as some conjecture (from Tacitus), or from Belgic Gaul, the only essential difference between these nations and the Celts consisted in name and local position. The aboriginal inhabitants of Britain must have been Celtic, for that race anciently possessed the whole of continental Europe.

"When the Highland chief entered on his government, he was placed on the top of a cairn, raised in the form of a pyramid, and around him, but lower, stood his friends and followers. One of the principal persons then delivered him a sword and a white wand; and the orator, bard or Druid, recounting his pedigree, enumerated the exploits of his ancestors, and exhorted the young chief to emulate their noble example. By the Tanaist law, in Ireland, when the chief was elected, he stood on a stone placed on a hill, and took an oath to preserve all the ancient customs inviolate, and deliver peaceable possession to his successor. He, like the Highland chief, received a wand, and on descending from the stone, he turned thrice around backwards and thrice forwards. The Tanaist, on his election, performed the same ceremonies, but set one foot only on the seat of inauguration. The stone on which the Lords of the Isles were crowned, bearing the marks of the feet, still exists; and near the cathedral of Cashel is one used by the Kings of Munster for a similar purpose."

The Prince of Cumbria was the title formerly bestowed on the successor to the Crown of Scotland, when declared in the King's life-time. The crown was originally not hereditary. The title is given to Malcolm, in Macbeth, by his father, Duncan." (Century Dict. of Names.)

Parry's Cambrian Plutarch says: "The course taken by the Cymry, in their progress to Europe, as marked out in the Triads, may be compared with similar accounts given of the advances of the Cimmerii, and Cimbri, by Herodotus, Strabo, Dionysius, Pliny and other writers."

"The Triads are a kind of literature peculiar to Wales."
(*Enc. Brit., Vol.* 5, *Page* 316)

Perhaps we can catch something of the meaning of the word "Kymry" if we consider that "Ka" is the spirit, which is able to leave the body and visit other places, and—the murmur A-U-M signifies the summing up in itself of all truth. Thus we have Kama—signifying wish, desire, love, the Hindoo god of love—Kumara, the eternally youthful—Soma, primeval, all powerful, all pervading—

Gomer, "complete," and Imri, "eloquent," while Japeth means "blessed" and in Genesis, 19-6, we read—"Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

The ancient Welsh Triads and the Triads of India may perhaps evidence a great truth, that everything in this world is a trinity—land, air and water—sun, moon and stars—yesterday, today and tomorrow—birth, life and death—body, spirit and soul.

The Welsh alone seem to have maintained the purity of their ancient Celtic name, and from time immemorial unto the present day, have called themselves the "Kymry." This is perhaps due to the fact that in Wales the Celtic priests made their last stand, in their contest with Christianity, and when the last altar fire was extinguished, the Welsh people preserved their ancient traditions, and honored the name Kymry throughout the centuries which followed.

"When St. Columba established himself at Ii (I-On-i), or Iona, it was the death blow to Druidism in Scotland. He had, however, according to tradition, a great respect for the order, although he opposed their doctrines, and burnt their books.

"On the suppression of Druidism in Iona, it is said that the Welsh carried away many of the mystical instruments, which a partial revival of the system in their own country enabled them to use for several centuries." (Scottish Gael, Page 470.)

"The Leccan records of Irish history say that St. Patrick burnt no less than 180 Druidical tracts, and St. Columba, on his establishment at Iona burnt a heap of books which were written by the Britons." (Scottish Gael, Page 491.)

It is interesting to note that the most sacred sanctuary of the early Christian Church was Iona, which was also the ancient holy place of the Druids, and that Iona of the Celts and Ionia of the Greeks are very similar.

Renaud maintains that the ancient Druids were the first to teach clearly the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and that they had, originally, as high conceptions of the true nature of God, as the Jews themselves.

"Hesus, was the type of a Supreme Being, whose symbol on earth, was the oak. The mistletoe, when found growing on the latter, represented man—a creature entirely dependent on God for support, and yet, with an individual existence of his own. Human sacrifices were a natural consequence of the idea, dominant now, as in the days of the Druids, that the higher the victim, the more

complete the atonement offered to the Deity, for the sins of man." (Enc. Brit., Vol. 7, Page 479.)

"The word Druid was used in the early Celtic records to designate a class of priests corresponding to the Magi or wise men, of the ancient Persians, *and is of uncertain entymology.*" (*Enc. Brit., Vol. 7, Page* 477.)

THE HOLY PLACES OF THE CELTS

It is probable that the sanctuaries of the Celts on the Cumbrae Islands were first destroyed, and we know that later Christian shrines were found in these islands. Iona, the most sacred place in the British Isles, was then desecrated and the ancient temples destroyed or converted into Christian places of worship. Iona later became the most holy sanctuary of the early Christian church in Britain.

When the Angles invaded Mona, it is said that the Druid priests met them in procession, dressed in white, and attempted to drive them away with the most terrible curses, but the Angles persisted, drove out the priests, destroyed their temples and cut down the ancient oak forests in which the Druids performed their rites. Mona is known today as Anglesea, but it was evidently to this island that the Druid priests retreated, after St. Columba drove them out at Iona.

THE HOLY MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD

It is an interesting fact that every nation has had its "holy mountain" or holy place, which was sacred and most highly revered.

Japan	Rome	Ireland
Fujiyama	Olympus	Omagh
China	Greece	Wales
Shantung	Cumae and Athens	Mona
Thibet	France	Persia
Lhassa	Lourdes, Rheims	Kum
Palestine	Scotland	
Jerusalem	Iona, Cumbrae	

It seems as though there must be some greater reason than that of safety alone, for the establishment of these holy places in the highest mountains of many countries, and it seems almost as if the people of many nations have preserved a legend of some mountain of the distant past, the Holy Mountain of the Lord.

It is interesting to note in this connection that Omagh, Ireland, and Holyrood Abbey, Edinburgh, possessed the ancient privilege of "sanctuary" and that even the King dared not touch those who sought refuge within their walls.

There is an Irish legend that the first people of Ireland came from the Land of Youth, and it is noteworthy that the name of Persia, "Iran," was pronounced Er-an, 500 years ago, which seems to indicate that the Irish and the Iranians were originally of the same race. The letter "x" which is so frequently found in Celtic names is also found in such Persian names as Xerxes, Cyaxeres, etc.

It is claimed that the ancient Celtic word Kym meant "mountain," therefore we might infer that Kymry meant a people who came from the mountains, or mountaineers.

History shows, however, that the ancient name of Egypt was "Kem," which has been interpreted as meaning "the black land" from the blackness of the soil. No one really knows whether this is a correct interpretation or not, and I doubt its accuracy.

A study of Egyptian history reveals that "An" was the most ancient city of Egypt, and that it was the city of the sun-god, a seat of learning, and of the worship of the sun-god "Ra."

Rev. E. Davis, in Celtic Researches, says: "Annwn, the country of the dead, was according to the Kymry, situated in the lower region, in the going down of the sun, in the west, while the Celtic word Annwn reminds us of the 'Annunaki' of the Assyrians, the offspring of Anu, the sky, or the god of heaven, and may be compared with the Cwm Annwn, or children of Annwn, a kind of spirit believed in by the old Kymry of Britain."

Ana was also the mother of all the Irish gods, therefore there seems to be a close connection between the "An" of ancient Egypt, the Annwn of Britain, the Ana of Ireland and I-on-a.

Since the word "Kymry" has also been said to have been derived from Gomer, the son of Japeth, the son of Noah, it may be well to note that Gomer means "complete."

In Genesis 41-45 we find that reference is made to the word "on" meaning "the sun."

The Century Dictionary of Names says: "Om (but more originally and more correctly On) is an obscuration of An, a participle that plays a great role in the Hindoo religious literature —the mystic meaning of Om—as summing up in itself, all truth."

Om is a Sanskrit word *of uncertain origin,* a combination of letters, invested with peculiar sanctity, both in the Hindoo re-

ligions, and in Buddhism, with which the Brahmins had to begin, and end every sacred duty."

It is regarded as consisting of the three elements, A-U-M, symbolizing, respectively, Vishnu, Shiva and Brama, so that the murmur "Om" signifies the Hindoo Triad. Om is also the first syllable, of the formula of six syllables, so conspicuous in Buddhism, and especially Lamaism.

Here again we find the Triads, to which reference is made in the ancient Welsh Triads, the Om in India, the An of ancient Egypt, the Ana of Ireland, the Annwn of Wales and Britain. Is it merely a coincidence?

In Persia we still have a Temple of Kum, in the sacred City of Kum, south of Teheran, which still possesses the ancient privilege of sanctuary, where even the Shah recently sought refuge and protection against his enemies, and found safety, in this ancient sanctuary.

In the word Soma (Su-ma) we also find a curious connection. In its character as a god, Soma was all pervading, all powerful, healing all diseases, the lord of all other gods. The prominence of Soma and Haoma, in the Veda, and the Avesta, respectively, constitutes one of the most important indications of an original Indo-Iranian unity.

Between the On of Egypt and Genesis—the Ana of Ireland and the Annwn of Britain—the Sumeria of ancient Babylonia, and Samaria which was built by King Omri of Israel—the Soma and Haoma—Kama and Kumara—the Kem of Egypt and the Kym of the ancient Celts—the Cumea of Greece and Kum of Persia—the Kumra of Siam and Africa, and the Suma of Abyssinia—the Kumara of China, and the sacred OM of India, there seems to be some mysterious connection.

Whichever way we turn, we seem to find the words, "*origin unknown*," and there seems to be a great mystery about the whole matter.

A careful study of history reveals that the word Kym seems to have been a Triad, used to designate a people, a family and a sanctuary. The Celtic word "righ" means "chief" or supreme. Thus we have the Ard-Righ or paramount King of Ireland, at Tara. the paramount King of the Dalriadic Kingdom in Scotland and the paramount King of Britain.

The word "Kymry" and nearly all similar words are found to be associated with sacred places, or mysterious places, such as the Temple of Kum, Cumae, Cumbrae, etc.

It is a remarkable fact also that when it is used as a family name or the name of a city, the silver crosslet is nearly always found on the coat of arms. Thus we have Cromie in Ireland and Comrie in Scotland, Commercy in France, and many other instances, where the silver crosslet—on three grieces—is used on the coat of arms or as a crest. Surely this is not merely a coincidence!

Liberty has ever been valued more highly than life, by all Celtic peoples. Death has ever been sweeter than slavery.

Recently we have seen brave little Belgium trampled by German armies, but she did not yield or surrender. Those whom Caesar called "the bravest of all the Celts," preferred death to serfdom.

France, we have seen bleeding and wounded, but fearlessly facing her foe, dauntlessly defying death, and crying with grim determination, "They shall not pass!"

We have seen Britain, with her back to the wall, valiantly resisting the gray tides which dashed against her battle lines, and hurling them back across the Rhine in defeat, and despair.

Italy, Greece, Portugal, Roumania, and many other nations answered the call of the ancient Celtic blood, and their sons went forth to battle.

Even far away in the Himalayas, the legions of Indo-Irania beheld the signal fires on distant mountains, and hastened across the seas to answer the summons of their brothers in distant lands.

Is it a mere coincidence that when the sons of Lochlyn and the sons of Lyr were locked in mortal combat in the recent war, that practically all the Celtic nations of the earth fought in defense of their liberty?

Is it a mere coincidence that every great leader in the recent world war was of Celtic descent?

Is it a mere coincidence that a son of Kymry held aloft the white wand of power and defied the legions of Lochlyn?

The white champion's wand which was in the hands of Curoi-Mac-Daire when making the conquest of Erin and the whole world —the white wand which was placed in the hands of the young Celtic chief when he took the oath to preserve the ancient laws and customs of the Celts inviolate—the white wand which is used as a sceptre at the Coronation of the Emperors of Japan—are perhaps but ancient symbols that we are all brothers, children of the same Father, who is all-powerful, all-pervading, all-mighty, and who ever keepeth watch and ward over the sons of Kym.

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